County of San Diego

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NOTICE OF PREPARATION DOCUMENTATION

DATE: September 11, 2014

PROJECT NAME: Jacumba Solar Major Use Permit

PROJECT NUMBER(S): PDS2014-MUP-14-041

PROJECT APPLICANT: Jacumba Solar, LLC

ENV. REVIEW NUMBER: PDS2014-ER-14-22-001

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project involves the development of a 20-megawatt (MW) solar energy project (Proposed Project). As described above, the Proposed Project site is located in the Mountain Empire Subregional Plan Area and the Jacumba Subregional Group Area. The attached Regional Location Map shows the Proposed Project site's relationship within San Diego County. The attached Specific Location Map shows the project vicinity and conveys its relationship to the Mountain Empire Subregional Plan Area and Jacumba Subregional Group Area.

The Proposed Project would produce up to 20 MW of alternating current (AC) generating capacity and would consist of approximately 81,108 photovoltaic (PV) modules fitted on 2,253 fixed-tilt rack panels. In addition to the panels and direct current (DC) to AC conversion equipment (i.e., inverter and transformer units), the Proposed Project would include the following primary components:

- A 1,000-volt to 1,500-volt DC underground collection system and a 34.5-kilovolt (kV) underground collection system linking the inverters to the on-site project substation.
- A 110-foot x 215-foot on-site private collector substation site encompassing a fenced pad area and a maximum height of 35 feet to surrounding equipment.
- An approximately 10 MW battery energy storage system that would be located within the collector substation fenced boundaries.
- A 138 kV overhead transmission line (gen-tie) connecting the on-site substation to San Diego Gas and Electric's (SDG&E's) new East County (ECO) Substation.

Components of the Proposed Project would include installation of individual fixed-tilt-mounted PV modules which generate electricity by safely converting the energy of the Sun's photons

into DC electrons. The PV module arrays (a row of PV modules) would be supported by a fixed-tilt system that would be oriented along an east–west axis. The mounting structures are typically mounted on tubular shaped piles or beams. The PV modules, at their highest point, would be approximately 8 feet above the ground surface.

The east–west arranged fixed-tilt arrays would be constructed approximately 25 feet apart (centerline to centerline) in a north–south direction, with an east–west array spacing of approximately 12.5 feet. PV modules would be electrically connected to adjacent modules via underground wiring.

Inverters are a key component of solar PV power-generating facilities because they convert the DC generated by the PV module array into AC that is compatible for use with the transmission network. The inverters, medium-voltage transformers, and other electrical equipment would sit on site, mounted on concrete foundation pads. A 10 MW battery energy storage system is proposed adjacent to the on-site substation in the northeast section of the Proposed Project site.

The Proposed Project would interconnect to the ECO Substation, which is owned and operated by SDG&E. A 138 kV line interconnecting the Proposed Project to the ECO Substation would be constructed above-grade.

The project site would be fenced along the entire property boundary for security with 9-foot high fencing that meets National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) requirements for protective arrangements in electric supply stations. There are two different types of roads for the Proposed Project that would be improved to different load-bearing standards: fire access roads and service roads. All road surfaces would be gravel and have a permeable nontoxic soil binding agent in order to reduce fugitive dust and erosion. To comply with the fire code, clearing and grubbing, as necessary, in localized areas would be required for construction and access to the project sites. Additionally, a Fire Protection Plan will be prepared for the Proposed Project.

Construction: The construction of the Proposed Project would consist of several phases including site preparation, development of staging areas and site access roads, solar PV system assembly and installation, and construction of electrical transmission facilities. After site preparation, initial project construction would include the development of the staging and assembly areas, and the grading of site access roads for initial PV system installation.

Project construction would then include several phases occurring simultaneously with the construction of: (1) PV systems including the assembly of fixed-tilt racks, pile driving of support masts, and placement of panels and racks on support masts: (2) trenching and installation of the DC and AC collection system; (3) electrical transmission facilities including the construction of an on-site substation and a gen-tie; (4) a battery energy storage system; and (5) the grading of access and service roads.

Operation: Operation activities include the following: (1) routine inspection of overhead components and underground portions of cable systems; (2) routine maintenance including,

but not limited to, PV panel washing, equipment testing, monitoring, and repair; routine procedures to ensure service continuity; and standard preventative maintenance; (3) maintenance and repair of transmission facilities, including pole or structure vegetation removal, application of herbicides, equipment repair, and replacement.

The Proposed Project is anticipated to operate, at a minimum, for the life of its long-term Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA). The initial term of the PPA for the project is for 20 years, with additional terms anticipated. At the end of the useful project life, decommissioning would commence involving the removal of the panels for sale into a secondary solar PV panel market. The projects' components and on-site materials can be readily recycled.

Dismantling the project would entail disassembly of the solar facilities and substantive restoration of the site. Impacts associated with closure and decommissioning of the project site would be temporary and would span three basic activities: (1) disassembly and removal of all detachable above-ground elements of the installation; (2) removal of panel and racks and any other structural elements including those that penetrate the ground surface to a depth of 2 feet below grade; and (3) reuse of the land consistent with the Zoning Ordinance, which could include ground surface restoration to surrounding grade and reseeding with appropriate native vegetation.

PROJECT LOCATION:

The project property totals approximately 304 acres within the Mountain Empire Subregional Plan area in unincorporated San Diego County; see attached Regional Location Map. The Mountain Empire Subregional Plan area contains five Subregional Group Areas. The Proposed Project would disturb an approximately 108-acre area located adjacent to the U.S.–Mexico International Border, in the vicinity of the Jacumba Subregional Group Area; see attached Specific Location Map.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

The probable environmental effects associated with the project are detailed in the attached Environmental Initial Study. All questions answered "Potentially Significant Impact" or "Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated" will be analyzed further in the Environmental Impact Report. All questions answered "Less than Significant Impact" or "Not Applicable" will not be analyzed further in the Environmental Impact Report.

The following is a list of the subject areas to be analyzed in the EIR and the particular issues of concern:

Aesthetics
Air Quality
Biological Resources
Cultural Resources
Geology & Soils
Hazards & Hazardous Materials

Hydrology & Water Quality
Land Use & Planning
Noise
Public Services
Transportation/Traffic
Utilities & Service Systems

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING:

Consistent with Section 21083.9 of the CEQA Statutes, a public scoping meeting will be held to solicit comments on the EIR. The meeting will be held on September 23, 2014 at 6:00pm at the Jacumba County Library located at 44605 Old Highway 80, Jacumba, CA 91934.

Attachments:

Project Regional Location Map
Project Specific Location Map
Plot Plan Exhibit
Environmental Initial Study